

30.01.2014

**Lunch in honour of Enrique Iglesias, Ibero-American general
secretary**

Banco de España

Luis M. Linde

Governor

Dear Enrique, dear colleagues,

In September 2005, as part of the events organised at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington to bid farewell to Enrique, there was a meeting of the Board of Executive Directors at which we commented on his major contribution to Ibero-American politics and economics.

I said at the time that Enrique's political and public personality could be characterised in four broad strands. Allow me to summarise them.

The first is a personal view, encapsulating everything Enrique has done. Enrique Iglesias is incapable of resorting to rhetoric. My impression is that, quite simply, he cannot express himself using what the French call "langue de bois", language used to say what you do not feel and do not think, simply because it's what the majority think, what is politically correct and what allows you painlessly to skirt the issue. This is difficult to find in someone with such a visible political profile who has been under every possible spotlight for so many years. Enrique has a remarkable ability to expound and thread together ideas with great substance and intelligent straightforwardness. Those who know him well say it is not easy to hear him say what he does not think. And that is, I believe, the secret of his effectiveness as a communicator: self-conviction, expressed simply and sincerely.

My second observation has to do with economics. Throughout his years at the IDB and the SEGIB, his main economic and political ideas were not always immovable. Enrique has rather constantly taken what I would call a position - and I don't know whether he likes the term - of "centrist realism". He was at the helm of the IDB at a time of waning "real socialism" and a renaissance of the market as a resource-allocation mechanism, with all that entailed politically and economically worldwide. But he was able to assume these changes undogmatically, not adopting extreme positions or imitations, in a balanced and critical fashion. His critical vision, always at some distance from the prevailing economic paradigm, is another lesson Enrique has imparted wherever he has worked.

The third strand relates to politics. The shift in the 90s towards the market model was not in a political vacuum: what we might call democratic accountability has gained powerfully in prominence, and was in the form of two ever-present priorities in Enrique's work: the strengthening of the rule of law and of the public and private institutions that are vital for sustained economic development. His watchword here was *more market and better government*, with which many of us feel we can identify.

The fourth strand concerns the history of the Ibero-American continent, which is also the history of Spain. I would venture to say that what has most deeply inspired Enrique Iglesias, the sentiment that has ultimately underpinned his efforts and dedication over so many years at the head of the IDB and the SEGIB, has been the idea of continental unity, under the guiding principles of development, economic integration and political cooperation. I once heard him refer to the fragmentation, early in the 19th century, of what we now call Ibero-America or Latin America, as a great historical drama. For him, the unity is there; you just have to be able to see it. I would say that this vision, aimed at

bringing people together and at countering division and sterile confrontation, befits that of a Spaniard with a “foot in both hemispheres”, to paraphrase the Cadiz Constitution.

To conclude, I stated back in September 2005 that Enrique Iglesias was not retiring, as that was an ontological impossibility. And the same holds good today.

I’ve been told you’re considering sharing your time between Madrid y Montevideo. While you may keep an office in Madrid, we’ve no doubt you will continue working for what you have devoted your political and professional life to: the Ibero-American Community of Nations.